

MODEL 1: CHARACTER TRAITS

How do Mrs. Wilson's thoughts about her daughter affect your impression not only of the daughter but also of Mrs. Wilson herself?

from **The Opportunity**

Short story by **John Cheever**

Mrs. Wilson sometimes thought that her daughter Elise was dumb. Elise was her only daughter, her only child, but Mrs. Wilson was not so blinded by love that the idea that Elise might be stupid did not occasionally cross her mind. The girl's father had died when she was eight, Mrs. Wilson had never
5 remarried, and the girl and her mother lived affectionately and closely. When Elise was a child, she had been responsive and lively, but as she grew into adolescence, as her body matured, her disposition changed, and some of the wonderful clarity of her spirit was lost. At sixteen she seemed indolent, and to have developed a stubborn indifference to the hazards and rewards of life.

Close Read

1. Based on Mrs. Wilson's thoughts about her daughter, how would you describe Elise?
2. What do Mrs. Wilson's thoughts reveal about the kind of mother she is? Cite details to support your answer.

MODEL 2: ROUND AND FLAT CHARACTERS

Here, a man named César reflects on the unfortunate turn his life has taken. As you read, pay attention to César's thoughts about his son.

from **A Place Where the Sea Remembers**

Novel by **Sandra Benítez**

When he was twenty-one, he had married Concha Ojeda. It was she who had allowed him to turn himself over to the sea. But now Concha was gone and in the months since the accident, the boy had gone mute and was clearly in decline. The boy needed a mother's love, he needed a father's strength, and
5 there was none of one and little left of the other. César thought of Concha's sister, who lived in Oaxaca. She had asked for the boy. She would raise him with her own, she had said at the wake. Since that time, César Burgos had agonized over his sister-in-law's offer and there were moments when he thought he would have to let the boy go.
10 He turned to his son, who sat at the table. . . .
"Why don't you speak?" Cesar cried, heat surging up his neck and into his cheeks.

Close Read

1. Is César a round or flat character? Cite details to support your answer.
2. Reread the boxed text. What do you learn about César from his thoughts about his sister-in-law's offer?